

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) held in Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 7 April 2015.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.
Councillors I J Curtis, M Francis, R Fuller, P Kadewere, S M Van De Kerkhove and Mrs R E Mathews.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors K M Baker, R C Carter, A J Hardy, Mrs P A Jordan and Mrs D C Reynolds.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Ruth Rogers – Healthwatch Cambridgeshire Chief
Inspection Laura Hunt – Cambridgeshire Constabulary
Detective Sergeant Ian Moore – Cambridgeshire Constabulary

100. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 3rd March 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

101. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest received from those Members that were present.

102. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel received and noted the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which had been prepared by the Executive Leader for the period 1st April 2015 to 31st July 2015.

It was noted that a report on the Customer Services Strategy would be presented to the Panel's meeting in June and the Annual Report on the Home Improvement Agency would be presented to the Panel's meeting in July.

103. HEALTHWATCH UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Ruth Rogers, Chairman of Healthwatch Cambridgeshire, to the meeting who proceeded to address the Panel to provide an update on its activities.

The Panel had previously received a presentation two years ago when Healthwatch Cambridgeshire had recently been inaugurated

and was without a full complement of staff.

As a background it was explained that the role of Healthwatch Cambridgeshire was to ensure public voices were heard in all aspects of health and social care and was a not for profit organisation.

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire encompassed the whole of Cambridgeshire and had played a significant role prior to the Care Quality Commission audit of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. It was explained that Healthwatch Cambridgeshire had facilitated public comments and complaints regarding Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. These had included many positive views as well as negative. Overall a balanced view about the hospital and what could be improved had been received.

The Chairman of Healthwatch had attended a meeting with the new Chairman and the two new Non-Executive Members for Hinchingsbrooke Healthcare NHS Trust and had felt a strong commitment from the Board. It was noted that more Non-Executive Members were to be recruited.

Mental Health Services was listed on the Panel's activities and it was noted that this service was problematic within Cambridgeshire. A local charity called 'Pinpoint' had assisted with the collection of evidence regarding problems faced by parents in the diagnosis and provision of care, especially for children with additional needs and disabilities. Healthwatch Cambridgeshire had been able to escalate these issues to Healthwatch England for national recognition.

Accessing GP appointments was a growing issue and it was NHS England that was the responsible authority for this matter. A lack of funding was a key issue in addressing this problem. When the GP surgery in Cambourne had been established funding was accessible that allowed the surgery to open before it had the required number of patients. However, this funding was no longer available.

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire encouraged people to contact them with any concerns, compliments or complaints they had regarding health and social care. District Councillors played an important role as they received contributions from constituents.

In response to questions regarding accident and emergency hospital admissions it was explained that many and varied conditions arrived for treatment at accident and emergency departments. UnitingCare Partnership had been selected by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust (CPFT) to improve older people's healthcare and those with lifelong conditions. Often cross boundary issues meant that the care provided was variable. A new system was introduced on 1 April 2015 whereby 18 neighbourhood teams had been established consisting of multi-disciplinary individuals with the intention of preventing such issues and avoiding hospital admissions.

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire had not undertaken any formal analysis to assess the correlation between obtaining a GP appointment and accident and emergency attendances as there had been other studies done on the matter. It was acknowledged that difficulties in accessing

GP appointments was impacting on accident and emergency attendance figures and it was reported that the Citizen Advice Bureau had undertaken a recent survey which had established that some people, particularly younger people, were unaware of information about their local GP surgery such as its opening times, and therefore went to accident and emergency instead.

In response to questions regarding communicating with other organisations, avoiding duplication of work and the budget situation of Healthwatch Cambridgeshire, it was explained that there were many other organisations that had a significant amount of knowledge. Therefore Healthwatch Cambridgeshire worked closely with Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations and any other organisations that wanted to work in partnership to avoid duplication of work and for information sharing purposes. It also beneficial that Healthwatch Cambridgeshire had a clear definition of its remit and purpose. It was further explained that Cambridgeshire County Council provided a grant to Healthwatch Cambridgeshire via central Government which was not ring-fenced. In the 2015/2016 budget there had been a 5% cut in the grant, which Healthwatch Cambridgeshire had accommodated. However, if such reductions continued in future years it would be difficult to absorb.

A point was made that some GP surgeries were operated by part-time GPs which created problems regarding continuity of care.

Given the varied knowledge amongst the Panel regarding health care services, the Chairman enquired how the Panel should work with Healthwatch Cambridgeshire to best inform policies and hold health care services to account. It was explained that Ms Rogers would discuss with the Chief Executive of Healthwatch Cambridgeshire the information that it gathered as it was not currently separated into district level. Councillors could be provided with the information that Healthwatch Cambridgeshire collated and circulated to its providers. The Chairman stated that he would continue his discussions with the Chief Executive of Healthwatch Cambridgeshire.

The Chairman concluded by expressing appreciation to Ms Rogers on behalf of the Panel for attending the meeting.

104. CLOSER WORKING WITH THE POLICE

The Panel received a presentation from Chief Inspector Laura Hunt, who was accompanied to the meeting by Detective Sergeant Ian Moore, to inform the Panel on:

- Policing Priorities;
- Vision within Huntingdonshire for 2015/16;
- Control Strategy Priorities;
- Similarities between the Community Safety Priorities and Huntingdonshire District Council Corporate Plan.

It was reported that the priorities for Huntingdonshire Police, alongside its neighbourhood policing activities, were:

- Responding to local concerns - understanding our communities

and managing risk within them;

- Investigating crime and protecting the vulnerable - protecting those who will be hurt, or hurt again, if we don't take action;
- Staff professionalism - supporting, developing and rewarding 'our people' to deliver Policing Priorities; and
- Keeping people safe in their communities.

An explanation was provided on how the priorities were being achieved. There was now less focus on numbers and more on value-based outcomes. The way in which crime data was recorded had changed which had affected the statistics in some Police forces. The changes had resulted in a slight reduction in overall crime in Huntingdonshire which demonstrated that the force had previously been recording crime data accurately.

The Huntingdonshire Police Vision for 2015/16 was to be supporting, empowering and belonging. Putting the person at the heart of all that the Police do and aiming for a seamless service.

Special Constables were slowly being recruited and those that had completed the required number of hours each month, along with Police Community Support Officers, were issued with handheld devices to reduce the need to work out of the station and therefore create a greater street presence.

It was explained that the Police previously had control strategy priorities such as dwelling burglaries and anti-social behaviour. These were still a priority but the following were now significant emerging issues:

- Cyber-crime;
- Modern-day slavery; and
- Child sexual exploitation.

It was reported that there was an intelligence gap in addressing the above priorities. Reference was made to the human trafficking case - Operation Endeavour by Fenland Police.

It was further reported that there was evidence in Huntingdonshire of modern-day slavery and by working in partnership with various organisations and gathering intelligence the Police would be able to address the problem earlier. For example a dwelling generating more waste than was appropriate to the size of the premises could identify a house of multiple occupancy.

To address street drinking in Huntingdon Town Centre the Police had worked in partnership with the District Council to introduce a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for the town centre. Street drinking was an issue in Oxmoor particularly in the summer months and the reasons for this needed to be explored as it could be an indication of hot-bedding, whereby the individual was unable to go to their place of residence until a set time.

Huntingdonshire had already experienced an issue with child sexual

exploitation via an Albanian owned hand car wash establishment in St Neots. Children were incited to work for individuals and were unaware that they are being exploited.

One of the aims of the Community Safety Plan was to focus on victims and the vulnerable which was also a policing priority. Common ground and shared objectives existed between the Huntingdonshire Police priorities and Huntingdonshire District Council Corporate Plan. It was noted that Luminus Group were hosting a Mental Health Seminar on 22 April 2015.

The Chief Inspector wanted a continued and meaningful dialogue with the Councillors and enquired how best to achieve this. The Panel noted that the Council had a Community Safety Partnership. However, the Chief Inspector stated that there was no longer continued Councillor representation at the meetings and the issues considered were operational issues. The Panel's responsibility was a challenging role and therefore more appropriate to strategic issues.

An example was provided of how the Panel could be involved in future decisions. Huntingdonshire Police were required to identify £6.9 million of savings in the 2016/2017 budget. The Panel could consider the proposed savings in relation to any budget savings the Council was proposing and the impact these could have.

The public perception of the Police was not good and a recent experience by a Councillor was relayed to the Chief Inspector. The public had a wealth of knowledge and the way in which the Police could be contacted needed to be improved. It was acknowledged that public confidence in the Police required improvement and articles in the national press did not assist with this issue. Regarding mental health cases it would be preferable if the Police could work in partnership with other organisations as currently if the Police were concerned for an individual with a mental health issue the Police had to arrest and detain the person in a police cell, which was not necessarily the most appropriate place.

Concern was expressed by the Panel at the length of time calls to 101 were answered. The average current wait time for 101 calls to be answered was seven to eight minutes. However, it could be considerably longer.

Concern was also expressed by a Panel member regarding the three control strategy priorities relating to Cyber-crime; Modern-day slavery; and Child sexual exploitation as these would not necessarily build public confidence when the issues that were directly affecting the public were other matters such as dwelling burglaries. It was emphasised that matters such as dwelling burglaries were still a priority for the Police and depending on the crime experienced in a particular area would determine the weekly priorities for that Policing area. An example was provided whereby there had been a number of tool thefts from vehicles in the Yaxley area over the previous week, which would therefore feature as a priority for that Police area.

The former and present Sergeant for Ramsey was commended by the Local Ward Member.

The Panel had been made aware that crimes such as child sexual exploitation or matters concerning vulnerable people were often complex and people were able to report any concerns via any methods, such as emailing the Chief Inspector, eCops or Crimestoppers.

The Chairman noted that an annual report by Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) and it was the responsibility of the Panel to scrutinise and challenge.

A Panel Member noted that the former Neighbourhood Panel meetings were multi agency meetings which had been useful and could be re-instated. The Chief Inspector noted that attendance by the public at these meetings had been variable and she was keen to see if there was an appetite for a version of the Neighbourhood Panel meetings. The Chief Inspector further noted that in the past eighteen months only three Parish Councils had invited her to a Parish Meeting. Following the elections a Panel Member offered to place an article in his quarterly newsletter to assess the interest in re-establishing Neighbourhood Panel meetings. It was noted that a model for Neighbourhood Panel meetings was in existence which could be adopted by any organisation should they wish to facilitate such meetings.

The Managing Director suggested that the Panel might wish to consider taking the Panel meetings on the road and invite the public to address the meeting.

The Panel agreed for the Managing Director and the Chief Inspector to meet to discuss the way forward regarding continued dialogue between District Councillors and the Police. One potential option suggested was for the Chief Inspector to regularly attend and present to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being).

The Panel also requested that they be invited to the Mental Health Seminar being hosted by the Luminous Group on 22 April 2015.

The Chairman concluded by expressing appreciation to the Chief Inspector on behalf of the Panel for attending the meeting.

105. WORKPLAN STUDIES

The Panel received and noted a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of studies being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Economic Well-Being and Environmental Well-Being.

106. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROGRESS

With the aid of a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel reviewed the progress of its activities since the last meeting.

Referring to the Redesign of Mental Health services the Chairman

noted that a Children's Mental Health Team Representative was to be invited to attend a future Panel Meeting either in June or July 2015.

Councillor Fuller provided an update regarding the Affordable Housing Working Group. It was reported that there was a considerable amount of information that the Group was still attempting to digest, such as affordable housing in terms of this authority particularly as the Local Plan contained affordable housing figures which the Working Group had been informed would never be achieved. The Elphicke-House report contained good suggestions and the Working Group had requested the Head of Development report on how it related to the authority. Community Land Trusts (CLTs) had been discounted and there was no desire for the authority to invest in affordable housing as it would be better to use its finances elsewhere. The Affordable Housing Working Group would like a representative from each of the Panels to sit on the Affordable Housing Working Group as it had a wider remit than the Social Well-Being Panel.

Following discussions, given the imminent submission date of the Local Plan it was agreed that a meeting would be arranged with the Affordable Housing Working Group, the Managing Director, the Executive Councillor (Strategic Planning and Housing) and the Leader in order to progress the matter including the inclusion of recommendations for the Local Plan and to inform any refresh of the housing strategy.

107. SCRUTINY

The 154th Edition of the Decision Digest was received and noted.

Chairman